

## Pentagon Plans Heavy Investment in UAV Development

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**W**ASHINGTON, March 18, 2003—The Defense Department today unveiled a billion dollar roadmap for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) during the next 25 years. Plans call for developing joint interoperable UAVs that are capable of everything from surveillance to air strike.

“The roadmap provides those high-priority investments necessary to move UAV capability to the mainstream,” said Dyke Weatherington, Deputy of the UAV Planning Task Force in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, at a DoD press briefing today. “The potential value UAVs offer ranges across virtually every mission area and capability of interest to DoD. The roadmap identifies those key technology areas that we think are right for investment.”

The Pentagon has made UAV weapon systems a priority. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who strongly supports the UAV program, has pushed UAVs as one way to transform the military.

Today, about 90 UAVs support military operations around the world, and the Department has them standing by for potential use over Iraq.

By 2010, according to the roadmap report, DoD hopes to increase its UAV inventory to about 350. And the Department plans to increase that to more than a thousand in the outyears, according to Weatherington.



Deputy for the Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Planning Task Force, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Dyke Weatherington briefs reporters on the UAV Roadmap report during a Pentagon press conference on March 18, 2003. The UAV Roadmap outlines development of unmanned aircraft for the next 25 years.

DoD photo by Helene C. Stikkel



Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle  
DoD Photo

From 1991 to 1999 the Pentagon invested about \$3 billion in UAV projects. That is projected to rise to \$10 billion from today through 2010, according to the latest *DoD Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Roadmap 2002-2027* report.

The Air Force's Predator UAV proved its military capability flying reconnaissance missions in Bosnia, and was credited with taking out one of Al Qaeda's top lieutenants in Afghanistan with a Hellfire missile.

Besides Predator, the military services are developing other UAV platforms. For example, the Air Force has another UAV called Global Hawk. The system is completely computer-operated and can be used for long-term surveillance. The high-flying Global Hawk currently carries photo reconnaissance equipment, but production versions of the system will carry electronic intelligence gathering materials. The Global Hawk can stay airborne for 32 hours.

The Army has developed the Shadow 200 tactical UAV. The Army also has the Hunter UAV, and both are primary surveillance UAVs and relay video in real time.

Meanwhile, the Marine Corps has developed Dragon Eye, a small, hand-launched UAV that can give leaders a snapshot of the battlefield, and it plans to make improvements to the Pioneer UAV developed by the Navy. The Pioneer was used in the 1991 Gulf War.

The Navy is developing Neptune, which can drop small payloads and the X-46/X-47, a large autonomous unmanned combat aerial vehicle that has a 34-foot wingspan. The system will be initially built for tactical surveillance, but the Navy envisions it one day becoming a strike system.

Weatherington said that UAVs offer a unique advantage for military leaders because they can conduct dangerous missions without the risk of human life. UAVs will soon have the capability for reconnaissance in areas possibly contaminated with biological or chemical agents or suppress enemy air defenses, or provide deep strike interdiction, he said.

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